

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 9, 2007. Claims 1-9 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1 and 9 are in independent form. Claims 1-4 have been amended to define Applicants' invention more clearly. Claim 9 has been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0055689 (*Block*), and Claim 5 was rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Block* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,897,620 (*Walker*). Applicants submit that independent Claims 1 and 9, together with the claims dependent therefrom, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is a consumer travel integration method, which includes allowing access to a host server via at least two out of a plurality of travel channels to facilitate formation of a travel plan, where the plurality of travel channels includes an internet connection, a telephone, and a physical travel office. The host server is in communication with, and provides access to, a plurality of travel-related resources. Those resources include some combination of travel vendor databases, user multi-use point of service terminals, and/or global distribution systems that include any computer network that provides inventory access that is at least related to hotel, condominium, rental car, train, bus, and airline inventory. The method also includes receiving a travel booking for the travel plan by a first one of the travel channels, associating the travel booking with a travel customer, storing the travel booking

and customer data for the travel customer in a central repository, and receiving a travel change for the travel plan by one of the travel channels, which may be either the same as or different from the first travel channel. In addition, the method also includes retrieving the travel booking and the customer data from the central repository, servicing the travel change by modifying the travel booking to produce a modified travel booking, and storing the modified travel booking in the central repository.

One notable feature of Claim 1 is allowing access to a host server via at least two out of a plurality of travel channels to facilitate formation of a travel plan, wherein the travel channels include an internet connection, a telephone, and a physical travel office. Also notable is that the host server is in communication with, and provides access to, a plurality of travel resources, by which is meant, in the context of Claim 1, travel vendor databases, user multi-use point of service terminals, and/or global distribution systems that include any computer network that provides inventory access that is at least related to hotel, condominium, rental car, train, bus, and airline inventory. By virtue of these features the method provides an open and consistent vehicle for all requests to initiate, modify or cancel travel bookings for any type of travel regardless of the travel channel(s) used (internet, telephone, physical travel office). In particular, the customer is able to use one travel channel to modify or cancel a booking made using a different channel. In addition this feature allows for the any user in any location using any travel channel to access information across separate networks (GDS). In contrast, previous systems included separate networks that prevented users from accessing all travel bookings unless the same travel channel was used to both initiate and modify the booking.

Block relates to an internet based air travel reservation system. As Applicants understand the *Block* system, a consumer who is registered to use the system may make travel reservations using the internet and then subsequently modify them through the *Block* system. In addition, it appears that the *Block* system provides a plurality of specific web pages providing information on a plurality of individual travel facilities: “[T]he plurality of individual travel facilities include facilities of different types with the plurality of specific web pages including groups of standardized web pages to provide ease of use, familiarity and consistency among web pages providing information on each type of facility.” (*Block*, claim 6). Even if the webs pages could properly be viewed as being distinct travel channels, *Block* does not provide for a plurality of different types of travel channels (e.g., telephone and/or physical office, as well as internet as in the *Block* system).

Nothing has been found in *Block* that is believed to teach or suggest allowing access to a host server via at least two out of a plurality of travel channels to facilitate formation of a travel plan, where the travel channels include an internet connection, a telephone, and a physical travel office, and where the host server is in communication with, and provides access to, a plurality of travel resources (travel vendor databases, user multi-use point of service terminals, and/or global distribution systems that include any computer network that provides inventory access that is at least related to hotel, condominium, rental car, train, bus, and airline inventory).

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is allowable over *Block*.

Independent Claim 9 is a system claim corresponding to method Claim 1, and is also believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from Claim 1, and therefore are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim also is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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